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SUBJECT: COUNCIL OF BALTIC SEA STATES SEEKS MORE COLLABORATION WITH
OBSERVER STATES

REF: A) STOCKHOLM 446, B) COPENHAGEN 282

¶1. Summary: On October 6, REO and Embassy staff attended the annual consultations between the Council of Baltic Sea States and its observer states (including the U.S.). CBSS officials presented priorities for the upcoming year and highlighted successful ongoing cooperation under CBSS experts groups on nuclear safety, children at risk, and the CBSS Task Force Against Trafficking in Human Beings (all involving U.S. participation). Observer state representatives outlined respective contributions to the work of the CBSS. Using guidance provided by the Department, we emphasized USG appreciation for observer status, support for the CBSS reform process, and USG willingness to explore new cooperation on a case-by-case basis, across the range of CBSS priority areas. The eighth CBSS summit meeting will take place June 1-2, 2010, in Vilnius. End Summary.

¶2. Nordic/Baltic Regional Environmental Officer Erik Hall, and Carolyn Westerod of the EU Presidency Unit in Embassy Stockholm on October 6 attended an annual meeting between the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) and observer states, in Stockholm. Participants included members of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) from CBSS member states (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the European Commission), representatives of CBSS observer States (Belarus, France, Italy, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom, USA) and the CBSS Secretariat.

¶3. In its invitation to this meeting the CBSS had put observer states on notice that "observer status implies that observers must contribute to CBSS activities in line with its long term priorities." In a follow-up letter to participants (copied to EUR/NB, and including a detailed CBSS calendar of events under the Lithuanian presidency) dated October 13, CSO Chairman Neris Germanas thanked participants and requested that observer states which had suggested closer cooperation with other regional councils provide contact information. He also requested that observer states add a link to the CBSS on their foreign ministry websites, and requested a technical contact point to help the CBSS to do the same.

Experts Collaborating on Children at Risk

¶4. After CBSS CSO Chairman Germanas briefly outlined the ongoing CBSS reform process and the priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency, Lars Loof, secretary to the CBSS Expert Group for Cooperation on

Children at Risk (EGCC) briefed on the expert group's recent work in the area of Child Safety. This work consisted of identifying, supporting and implementing cooperation on children at risk between countries and organizations in the region. Furthermore, it examined and reviewed areas of concern with regards to children, as identified by its network of national coordinators and experts. Based on these findings, the EGCC adopted programs and implemented actions within areas of concern. Activities and programs were carried out with national authorities, agencies and organizations in cooperation with regional and international organizations. Mr. Loof described the newly adopted priority areas for the EGCC as following:

--Protection of children from all forms of sexual exploitation, including:

--Unaccompanied and trafficked children

--Children abused by being offered money or other forms of remuneration in exchange for sex

--Children and online sexual exploitation

--Protection of children from all forms of sexual abuse and sexual violence, and,

--Rights of children in institutions and in other forms of "out of home" care.

US Participation in anti-TIP Training

15. Mr Loof noted that U.S. authorities had cooperated with the EGCC on the topics of Internet safety and child trafficking in the past. Norway's CSO praised the achievements of this CBSS effort, noting

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that EGCC training had been carried out throughout the Baltic Sea region. CBSS Director General Gabriele Kotschau highlighted the related work of the CBSS Task Force on Human Trafficking in offering expert training to authorities in all CBSS member states, including participation from the U.S. Kotschau invited observer states to receive similar training organized by CBSS, offered at cost.

Nuclear Safety Experts Collaborating

16. Finn Ugletveit, Chairman of the CBSS Expert Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety (EGNRS), described the group's activities. The EGNRS was established in 1992 and integrates national authorities of the CBSS members and its observers, including DOE experts. The Expert Group met twice a year and more frequent in smaller sub-groups on an ad-hoc basis to discuss specific tasks. Ugletveit noted that the EGNRS faced the constraint of limited funding, and invited observer states to contribute more in this in this area. Tasks of EGNRS include:

--collecting information about nuclear facilities and waste storage in the Baltic Sea Region;

--identifying sources of radioactivity that pose potential risks to the Baltic Sea Region;

--identifying potential nuclear and radiological risks that require immediate concerted remedial action;

--taking stock of and monitor various projects aimed at enhancing nuclear and radiation safety in the Baltic Sea Region; and,

--preparing relevant recommendations and develop initiatives accordingly.

17. Denmark's CSO commented that the work of these two expert groups constituted the "crown jewels" of CBSS cooperation, noting tangible benefits for member as well as observer states from these activities.

US Message: Appreciation; Will Consider New Cooperation

18. The consultations proceeded with the respective Observer States holding presentations on their past and future engagements in the CBSS. The Secretariat reiterated its wish to see more concrete participation by observer states. REO delivered a U.S. statement of appreciation for US observer status in CBSS, encouragement of the

CBSS reform process, and willingness to consider further engagement on a case-by-case basis across the range of CBSS priorities (environment; economic development; energy; education and culture; and civil security and the humanitarian dimension). The final text of the U.S. intervention (drafted by EUR/NB and abbreviated somewhat due to time constraints) has been shared with the Department (EUR/NB) electronically.

Other Observer State Input

¶9. Belarus' representative elaborated an ambitious list of priorities as an observer state, highlighting its participation in CBSS training activities even before becoming a formal observer to the CBSS in June 2009. The French representative thanked the CBSS for its inspiration for the Mediterranean Union, and promised more cooperation in the areas of nuclear safety and protection of children at risk. Italy's representative complimented the secretariat on its "impressive" work and expressed interest in strengthening cooperation and sharing lessons learned between the Baltic and Adriatic sub-regions. The Dutch representative noted that collaboration by the Netherlands had been limited in the past but expressed hope for more fruitful cooperation in the future, and cited the Nordstream gas pipeline project as an example of useful regional cooperation. Belarus, Romanian and Slovakian representatives highlighted potential CBSS collaboration with the EU's Eastern Partnership.

¶10. The Spanish representative pledged to work closely with the CBSS during the upcoming Spanish EU Presidency, when Spain's priorities would include a focus on energy, the economy and the environment. The Ukrainian representative promised to try to take

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part in future events that were organized by the CBSS. The United Kingdom representative said his government valued its observer status and wished to focus future collaboration on the expert groups.

¶11. Comment: We would like to thank the Department (especially EUR/NB and EB) for the comprehensive guidance provided for this meeting. U.S. views were heard and our willingness to explore continued and new collaboration appreciated by CBSS member states, offering an opportunity to advance shared interests on a range of issues in the future.

¶12. REO Copenhagen has cleared this cable.

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